(a) the outcome of the talks held by him on various bilateral matters, including trade and defence, with the Soviet and Russian leaders during his recent visit to Moscow;

(b) whether the issue of Kashmir also figured in the talks;

(c) if so, the details and the outcome thereof;

(d) whether the Russian President proposed the idea of direct diplomatic ties with India during the talks; and

(e) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) I was assured by President Gorbachev and other senior Soviet leaders that the USSR stands by all its commitments of India. This was confirmed by President Yeltsin of the Russian Federation.

It has been agreed that a high level multi-disciplinary group from India could visit Moscow in December to meet their counterparts both from the USSR and the Russian Federation with a view to discussing and resolving difficulties that have arisen in different sectors of cooperation.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does no arise.

(d) and (e). Yes, Sir. Some tentative suggestions have been made in this direction. No dicisions have been finalised in this regard.

[*Translation*]

LPG Agencies at Sasaram and Bhabhua in Bihar

3531. SHRI CHHEDI PASWAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the gas agencies allotted in Sasaram and Bhabhua in Bihar are in accordance with the set norm of setting up of one agency for every 20,000 people;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken so far for setting up of one gas agency for every 20,000 people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR): (a) to (c) As per present policy, LPG distributorships are opened in a phased manner, depending upon the economic viability and product availability, in towns having a population of 20,000 and above (as per 1981 census). Accordingly, an LPG distributorship has been opened at Sasaram.

[*English*]

Multi Disciplinary Indian Team to Moscow

3532. SHRI RABI RAY
DR. C. SILVERA
SHRI PIUS TIRKEY

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Multi Disciplinary Indian Team is scheduled to visit Moscow in the near future;

(b) if so, what would be the composition of the team;

(c) the bilateral matters to be taken up for the discussion during the visit;

(d) whether any Trade Pact is being finalised with USSR; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e). Discussions are expected to take place in respect of problems that have recently cropped up in Indo-Soviet relations due to the ongoing political and economic restructuring in the Soviet Union. These would include trade, economic defence and financial matters. The composition of the delegation would be determined once the agenda has been finalised.

Contracts for Modernisation of Rourkela Steel Plant

3533. SHRI RABI RAY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether contracts for modernisation of the Rourkela Steel Plant are likely to be awarded in the near future; and

(b) if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b): Contracts for 9 indigenous packages of Phase I and II indigenous packages of Phase II at Rourkela Steel Plant Modernisation Project already Stand finalised. Remaining 4 indigenous packages and 5 global packages are expected to be finalised by January 1992. Currently, price bids received for 5 global packages are under evaluation and negotiations in SAIL.

[*Translation*]

LPG Aggencies in Uttar Pradesh

3534. SHRI BALRAJ PASSI
DR. LAL BAHADUR RAWAL

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of LPG agiences of the Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) the locations thereof alongwith their capacities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR): (a) and (b). As on October 1, 1991, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation and Bharat Petroleum Corporation were reportedly having 44 and 93 LPG agencies respectively at different locations in Uttar Pradesh.

[*English*]

Involvement of Multi National Corporation in Coal Sector

3535. SHRI M.V.V.S. MURTHY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Union Government to involve Multi National Companies in Coal sector; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI S.B. NYAMMAGOUDA): (a) and (b). No Sir,